



CARE SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF VICTIMS SUBJECTED TO ANIMAL BITES ATTENDING PRELIMINARY CARE UNIT AT BASE HOSPITAL – BALAPITIYA, SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Rabies infects domestic or wild animals and is spread to human through close contact with infected animal bites. Although rabies is 100% fatal it is 100% preventable in humans with proper Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP). Since care seeking behaviour is an important factor in preventing rabies deaths, it is a timely need to find out the care seeking behaviour of animal bite victims and factors influencing the care seeking behaviour. The objective of the present study was to describe the care seeking behaviour of victims subjected to animal bites and to determine their associated factors with their care seeking behaviour. This was a descriptive cross sectional study conducted at the Primary Care Unit (PCU) at Base Hospital Balapitiya. A sample of 392 participants were recruited fulfilling the recruitment criteria. A pretested interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Majority 63.8% were dog bites. Of them 70.7% were bitten by a domestic rearing animal. Of the animal bites victims who presented to the hospital only 18.1% were vaccinated regularly. When consider the care seeking behaviour 96.4% attended the hospital for treatment within 3 days of the animal bite. The two factors found to be significantly associated with appropriate care seeking behaviour were having multiple wounds following animal bite ($\chi^2 = 4.856$, $p < 0.05$) and the residence of the participants ($\chi^2 = 6.654$, $p < 0.05$). The place of residence and having multiple wounds directly influence the treatment seeking behaviour of animal bite victims for the post exposure prophylaxis. The social status or the type of animal did not influence the treatment seeking behaviour. Majority of animals not being vaccinated is also a factor which is of a major concern in rabies prevention.

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